

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MEXICO 05808 102158Z

70

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 SNM-02 IGA-02 CIAE-00 INR-07

IO-13 JUSE-00 NSAE-00 TRSE-00 USIA-06 NSC-05 OES-06

OMB-01 /058 W

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R 061950Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4675

INFO DEA HQS WASHDC

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E.9. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR, MS

SUBJ: MEXICO ERADICATION AND INTERDICTION PROGRAM

SNM FOR AMB VANCE; AID/SER/INC FOR WAMPLER; DEA FOR EOI -
CUSACK

REF: A) MEXICO 5783, B) BERNAL/WAMPLER TELECON MAY 4, 76.

1. SUMMARY: DURING FOLLOW-UP MEETING BETWEEN STEERING
COMMITTEE (ALBERTI, HEATH, BERNAL) AND DR. GERTZ ON MAY 4,
TO DISCUSS POINTS IN REF (A), DR. GERTZ EMPHASIZED HIS
GRAVE CONCERN DUE TO ANOTHER INCIDENT RELATED TO HOSTILE
GROUND FIRE BY OPIUM GROWERS AGAINST THE ROTARY WING (RW)
AIRCRAFT IN THE ZONE 1 AREA. THE MOST RECENT INCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED
ON 3 MAY REPRESENTS THE FOURTH SUCH INCIDENT IN LESS THAN TWO WEEKS
AND DR. GERTZ ANTICIPATES ADVERSE PILOT REACTION UNLESS HE
TAKES IMMEDIATE POSITIVE MEASURES TO MINIMIZE THE RISK
TO PILOTS AND AIR CREWS. DR. GERTZ URGENTLY REQUESTED
USG PROCUREMENT OF ADEQUATE PROTECTIVE VESTS AND SOME
TYPE OF IMMEDIATE MODIFICATION TO THE RW AIRCRAFT
CABINS TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL PROTECTION FROM HOSTILE
GROUND FIRE. STEERING COMMITTEE REQUESTS SAO/MEX
PROCURE AND AIR SHIP ONE HUNDRED (100 LIGHTWEIGHT
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PAGE 02 MEXICO 05808 102158Z

FLEXIBLE PROTECTIVE VESTS. FYI: AVADV FORD IS AL-

READY IN CONTACT WITH BHC/FT. WORTH ON POSSIBLE
MODIFICATIONS TO CABIN AREA THROUGH USE OF IMPROVISED
PROTECTIVE LIGHTWEIGHT MATERIALS. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING WITH DR. GERTZ
AND HIS SENIOR STAFF IN EARLY JANUARY 1976, PRIOR
TO THE FULL-SCALE SPRAYING OPERATIONS. AV. ADV. FORD
UNDERScoreD THE REASON FOR THE SPRAY THEAM CONCEPT
WAS BASED ON PROVIDING LOGISTICAL SUPPORT AND IM-
MEDIATE SECURITY IN CASE OF GROUND HOSTILITIES. AT
THE TIME DR. GERTZ JUDGED, AND HIS SENIOR STAFF
AGREED, THE POPPY FARMERS WOULD NOT INITIATE ANY
OVERT HOSTILITIES AS THEY DID NOT WISH TO INCUR THE
ANTICIPATED RETALIATION BY THE GOM FORCES. AT THE
TIME, THE STEERING COMMITTEE STRESSED THAT A SIGNI-
FICANT INDICATOR TO GAUGE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE
SPRAYING OPERATIONS WOULD BE REFLECTED BY HOSTILE
ACTIONS AGAINST THE SHIPS OUT OF DESPERATION. RE-
CENT EVENTS PROVED THIS POINT. DR. GERTZ NOW EX-
PECTS AN ESCALATION OF HOSTILE ACTIONS AGAINST THE
SHIPS INCLUDING ATTEMPTS TO SABOTAGE. STEERING COM-
MITTED AGREES AND FORESEES THAT WHEN INTENSIVE SPRAY-
ING OPERATIONS AGAINST POPPY FIELDS ARE RESUMED IN
SEPTEMBER THE SITUATION COULD BE CRITICAL.

3. DR. GERTZ AND STEERING COMMITTEE JUDGE THE MOST
ADEQUATE LIGHTWEIGHT FLEXIBLE PROTECTIVE VEST COULD BE
THE SECOND CHANCE TYPE PROVIDED TO THE INTERDICTION
FORCES WORKING THE MOBILE VANS. THE VEST SHOULD
PROVIDE CHEST AND BACK PROTECTION WITH AT LEAST
TWELVE LAYERS OF MATERIAL INCLUDING THE OPTIONAL
GROIN AREA PROTECTIVE PIECE. FYI: THE FIFTY FLAK
SUITS PROVIDED TO ZONE 1 (CULIACAN) IN EARLY PART OF
CY 76 PROVED TOO CUMBERSOME AND HEAVY FOR AERIAL
SPRAYING FLYING AND WERE RETURNED TO DEA OFFICE IN
TUCSON BY DEA AIRCRAFT.

4. IN RESPONSE TO DR. GERTZ' REQUEST FOR IMMEDIATE
MODIFICATION TO RW SHIPS TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL PRO-
TECTION TO CABIN AREA, AV. ADV. FORD CONTACTED
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PAGE 03 MEXICO 05808 102158Z

BH/FT. WORTH TO EXPLORE IMPROVISED INSTALLATION OF
PROTECTIVE MATERIAL FOR PILOT AND CO-PILOT SEATS
AND TO THE FLOORING SHORT OF MILITARY TYPE ARMOR
WHICH IS EXTREMELY HEAVY AND COMPOUNDS MAINTENANCE.
FORD IS SCHEDULED TO FLY TO FT. WORTH TO EXPLORE
AVAILABILITY OF MATERIAL AND OBTAIN DESIGN FROM BHC
FOR POSSIBLE INSTALLATION IN MEXICO CITY.

4. ACTION REQUIRED: THAT SO/MEX APPROVE REQUEST
FOR PROTECTIVE VESTS AND AIR SHIP ASAP PREFERABLY
VIA DEA AIRCRAFT. ADVISE.
JOVA

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